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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 21st MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 13 May 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland)

later: Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji)
Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR FOR 1991 AND PRIORITY AREAS IDENTIFIED THEREIN (HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT) (agenda item 2) (continued) (DP/1992/12 and Add.1, 2, 4, 5 and 6)

1. Mr. SERKSNYS (Observer for Lithuania) said that, faced with the formidable task of undoing the damage done by 50 years of abuse and mismanagement, of rebuilding their country and leading it towards democracy and a market economy, Lithuanians lacked expertise and know-how. With its neutrality and experience, UNDP was in a position to offer them the assistance they needed, not only immediately in order to help the Government to work out reforms, but also in the longer term, to generate sustainable capacity. UNDP could also help them, through its management training programmes and advisory services, to derive the maximum benefit from the bilateral and multilateral assistance provided to them. Lithuania also needed UNDP's help to mitigate the serious adverse effects on the population of the reforms undertaken.

2. The early opening of a UNDP office in Vilnius would certainly greatly increase the chances of successful reforms. The threat of failure was very real and would benefit no one. His Government welcomed UNDP's readiness to respond quickly to the country's humanitarian and technical cooperation needs and was prepared to contribute to the costs of a UNDP presence in Vilnius. Voluntary contributions to the Baltic Trust Fund would spur growth and stability in the Baltic States by helping them to develop their human and institutional capacities in all fields.

3. Lithuania was not asking for special privileges. It was sensitive to the special needs of the developing countries and thought that UNDP should continue to give priority to the least developed countries.

4. Mr. RUSLI (Malaysia) observed that the world economic situation appeared to be increasingly difficult and that the resources which had been expected to be released following the ending of the cold war had yet to materialize. In those circumstances, it was vital that not only should adequate funding be made available to UNDP but also that the developed countries should endeavour to promote an international economic environment conducive to sustainable growth and development. While policy reforms were required, what was imperative was commitment and concrete action on the part of the developed countries and the international financial agencies to ensure, inter alia, free and fair trade, capital flows and transfer of technology. His Government was receptive to any initiative to restructure the United Nations delivery system and hoped that the reforms along those lines would be guided by a genuine desire for international cooperation based on the principle of neutrality. The Human Development Report 1992 was an improvement over the previous year's report in that it relegated the so-called human freedom index to the background and focused essentially on external impediments to development. There was nothing to be gained by attempts to relate development to unduly vague and abstract areas or to draw up indices that constituted judgements on the performance of Governments.

5. Over the past 40 years, UNDP had devoted itself to building up the national capacities of developing countries and had acquired considerable experience and expertise in that area, but the same was true of many recipient countries, including Malaysia, which were at the present time in a position to share their expertise and experience with other developing countries. UNDP should examine further the potential of using those capacities, particularly in the areas of economic planning and changes leading to a market-oriented economy. Malaysia was in the forefront of efforts to protect the environment at the national, regional and international levels and had taken care to include that question in its development planning. UNDP had rightly stressed environment and should specialize in infusing the necessary expertise and channelling of environmentally safe technology to the developing countries. It was to be hoped that the Rio Conference would define clearly UNDP's role in the promotion of the environment and sustainable development.

6. The success of the strategy for the promotion of the private sector that had been adopted for the fifth cycle was dependent on the ability of the developing countries to raise the necessary funds. With regard to other possible means of financing, the use of national IPFs was not always feasible and, therefore, more resources might be made available for that purpose under the intercountry and regional programmes. The use of national execution, national advisers and consultants should also be explored. Promoting the role of women in development was an accepted objective of the international community and UNDP should continue to coordinate its action with other relevant agencies with a view to achieving the objective contained in the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategy. Malaysia, where AIDS was not widespread, had nevertheless taken every possible measure within the Global Strategy on the pandemic. It appreciated the role played in that regard by WHO and UNDP and hoped that the various development agencies would complement their efforts to combat the disease.

7. Procurement by UNDP of goods and services from the developing countries enabled them to increase their foreign exchange earnings. However, despite the numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Governing Council, the level of procurement remained relatively low, although most developing countries offered many quality goods and services. His delegation urged the Programme and other United Nations agencies to make a serious effort to increase procurement from developing countries and called on the Administrator to report on the progress made in that regard to the Council at its fortieth session.

8. The Council was to approve at the current session the fifth country programme for Malaysia. Although the quantum of country IPF for Malaysia amounted to only US$ 7.091 million, representing a reduction of nearly 20 per cent compared with the previous cycle, his Government nevertheless wished to express its deep appreciation to UNDP for the neutral and universal nature of its assistance.

9. Mr. DERYCKE (Belgium) said that the most striking feature of the Human Development Report 1992 was the direction it had taken in favour of a genuinely human-centred-development strategy. However, the report developed two arguments which would undoubtedly raise some questions and related to

migration and the global market strategy. The theoretical benefits of migration, at least in a historical context, should not be overemphasized. The migrants of today supplied the secondary labour markets of the industrial countries, a phenomenon which, on the one hand, tended to depress wages in those countries and, on the other hand, eroded the competitive edge and export capacity of the newly industrialized countries in sectors such as textiles, agro-industry or the manufacture of semiconductors. The authors of the report, admitting that, in the short-term, "global markets" might adversely affect the weakest economies, proposed to transform ODA into a sort of socio-welfare net for the initial victims of those markets, a proposal that was at odds with the central concept of human-centred development. His delegation wondered how UNDP would incorporate the socio-pathology caused by structural unemployment into that strategy.

10. On the other hand, the report was more realistic with regard to democratization and human rights. Indeed, development also embraced political and human rights. His delegation and those of other European countries had undertaken to draw up a workable typology of human rights, and they hoped to extend the dialogue to the countries of the South very soon. There was also a need for more reflection on the use of ODA for the countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS. Belgium was concerned about the scale and speed with which proposals were launched for a full-fledged UNDP involvement in all the CIS republics. There was no lack of studies which proved that Eastern and Central European countries did not meet the criteria that defined developing countries. On the basis of a number of UNDP parameters, which were regarded as in-depth socio-indicators, Belgium had come to the clear conclusion that the "East" could not be regarded as belonging to the "South". The problems raised by those countries went far beyond the scope of classical instruments of ODA cooperation. Moreover, recent studies showed that the benefits for the East might still be marginal whereas the losses to the South might be very substantive.

11. His delegation fully supported the broad perspectives outlined by the President of the European Community with regard to the reform of the United Nations and UNDP. The Programme should perform a more centralizing function as the executing agency for development matters. Wishing to improve the effectiveness of its contributions to United Nations development agencies, Belgium fully supported the five ideas put forward by the Administrator. Lastly, Belgian development cooperation remained strongly committed to the least developed countries and the social priorities sector. Belgium would therefore continue to support UNDP activities in favour of the least developed countries, particularly in Africa.

12. Mr. KRINGSTAD (Norway) thought that the new social, economic and environmental challenges ensuing from the political changes that had taken place in 1991 called for renewed multilateral cooperation and a strengthened United Nations system. The Nordic project for the reform of United Nations operational activities had given rise to a debate and a positive response in the Governing Council, and it was to be hoped that the next debate at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council would take the process a step further. The multisectoral approach adopted by UNDP and its wide network of field representation facilitated coordination at the country level. In his

delegation's opinion, it would be necessary to strengthen UNDP's central role and encourage it to improve its operations so as to provide countries with specific support related to national priorities and its comparative advantages.

13. On the financial side, the level of income expected in 1991 had not materialized and programme resources might be reduced at a time when the situation of many recipient countries was deteriorating. Norway therefore reiterated the importance of the principle of burden-sharing and urged other donor countries to increase their contributions in the same way that it would like to see an increase in the number of major donors; for its part, the Programme had a responsibility to ensure a satisfactory quality in its operations. With regard to the new orientations for technical cooperation set forth in General Assembly resolution 44/211, his country approved the adaptation of technical assistance to national objectives and programmes; the name of "UNDP country programmes" would then be changed to "UNDP country strategies". The implementation of the programme approach could lead to greater coordination between the various components of the system and even result in a common United Nations country strategy, since national execution should not exclude the involvement of specialized agencies. The programme approach presupposed the strengthening of national management capacity, which was one of the primary objectives of UNDP.

14. For the fifth programming cycle, UNDP had clearly attempted to concentrate country activities in fewer areas, a main area being environment and natural resource management. That positive development reflected the high priority being given by countries to environmentally sound and sustainable development. UNDP should therefore strengthen its advisory services on environmental issues at the field level. The theme of women in development had not been given adequate attention in the country programmes. That horizontal theme should be integrated more systematically and explicitly in UNDP operations. It was of the utmost importance that the United Nations system should coordinate its response to the AIDS pandemic. In that regard, UNDP should strengthen its collaboration with national authorities and WHO within the framework of the Global Alliance to combat AIDS.

15. The adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182 should encourage UNDP to elaborate a strategy for dealing as effectively as possible with the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development and to collaborate closely with the new Department for Humanitarian Affairs and UNHCR. UNDP's annual reports on human development had helped to improve the Programme's analytical capacity and given it a new image. The measurement of human development remained problematical, but UNDP should endeavour to refine the concept and analyse its various aspects. A dynamic private sector was important for the achievement of broad-based development objectives, but an efficient public sector was necessary in order to create and maintain a conducive framework for private sector development. Compared with other organizations, for example, the World Bank, UNDP had the advantage of being in a better position to study the relationship between the two sectors and the incorporation of social and environmental considerations in the functioning of the private sector.

16. Norway welcomed as new recipient members of UNDP several republics of the former USSR which were facing enormous challenges. However, the Council should not make a decision on the possible establishment of UNDP resident offices in those countries until the questions of UNDP's role and comparative advantages and the possibilities of a common United Nations approach and financing from other sources had been answered. Due regard should also be given to other organizations working in those countries. In any event, UNDP's primary objective was to assist developing countries. The critical economic and social situation of those countries, particularly in Africa, should remain in the forefront of its concern, both in its overall policy work and in specific activities at the country level.

17. Mr. VARMA (India) said that, in a period of fundamental political and economic changes, the United Nations system had been called upon more than ever to play a major role in constructing a sound basis for the advent of a new and integrated comity of nations. Its nature made it the ideal instrument in that regard. His delegation welcomed the ambitious and very innovative ideas presented by the Administrator and his confirmation of the usefulness of international assistance.

18. Concerning UNDP field representation, India strongly supported the system of resident coordinators as it firmly believed that the coordination of United Nations developmental activities made for both efficient delivery and simplification of procedures while assisting Governments to interact in a coordinated way with the United Nations efforts. On the other hand, it had reservations about carrying out changes too rapidly in the areas of governance and financing: apart from the fact that the present system, while not perfect, had produced results, such a procedure might disorient or even seriously affect ongoing programmes. For those reasons and others, India considered that the matters raised by the Administrator should be carefully considered in the competent bodies such as the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

19. His delegation was pleased that UNDP would continue to focus on the poorest regions. On the question of the provision of assistance to the newly designated recipient States, since alternative arrangements were already in existence for that purpose elsewhere it would encourage UNDP to try to use the mechanisms of trust funds or other sources of financing and to continue to devote its resources to the developing countries.

20. Concerning the programme approach, his delegation welccmed the confirmation that the word "programme" referred exclusively to national programmes and that national plans and objectives were the only viable frame of reference for technical cooperation. The programme approach was being adopted increasingly in India. An extensive programme had been developed with the assistance of private sector companies for transfer of technology in the leather sector and another programme had been finalized in the jute sector in consultation with UNDP. Apart from the element of technology, those programmes would have important repercussions in terms of growth, income, employment and also in terms of the environment.

21. National execution and its corollary, the enhancement of national managerial capacity, had proved fruitful and India was satisfied with the results obtained in its collaboration with UNDP. It would like to see a further strengthening of the Programme's role in human resources building but had some doubts about the idea of orienting programmes exclusively in the direction of human development activities. It would not be the best way to use limited resources. Technical assistance was also needed in order to improve indigenous technology in ways that would bring benefits indirectly but just as importantly to vast sections of the population.

22. The Human Development Report focused attention on subjects which tended to be forgotten at present. His delegation would like to see more discussion with a view to reaching a consensus on what constituted human development and on the methodology for measuring it. There was also the question of whether it was cost-effective to publish the report every year.

23. Mr. MORALES (Cuba) said that UNDP had gained acceptance among the United Nations agencies not only because of the volume of the resources that it administered but also because, in conformity with the principles on which it had been founded, it had maintained its characteristics of universality, voluntarism and political neutrality; the reasons for which it had been set up continued to be valid, since no solution was in sight for the serious problems that beset the great majority of the countries of the third world. The struggle against poverty was a tremendous challenge for the whole of mankind, even more urgent than the problem of the environment, and in particular for the rich countries.

24. His delegation deplored the fact that the rate of increase in voluntary contributions had reached only 4 per cent instead of the 8 per cent forecast in 1991 and that financial difficulties had obliged UNDP and UNFPA to limit their expenditures. It also deplored the fact that the Human Development Report 1992 had been published in April although, contrary to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/218, no decision had been taken and no consensus existed on the subject. It also stressed the need to maintain the length of the session of the Governing Council at four weeks and to hold the high-level debate every year. It was convinced of the importance of the work accomplished by the Council, particularly concerning policies, but wished to underscore the importance of the participation of all members. It had no objection to efforts being made to increase the effectiveness of the Governing Council's work and to reduce the volume of documentation.

25. His delegation emphasized the usefulness, both for participants and for the countries and offices which were visited, of the field missions led by members of the Standing Committee for Programme Matters. In conclusion, it recalled the importance for the developing countries of all issues connected with industrial property and supported the proposal to strengthen that activity in the region within the framework of the regional programme for Latin America and the Caribbean.

26. Mr. Seniloli (Fiji) took the Chair.

27. Mr. HACHED (Observer for the Organization of African Unity) said that he shared the feelings of hope and optimism expressed by the Administrator about the situation in Africa and associated himself with the importance attached by him to the need to combine efforts to aid the continent. Pointing out that the African Ministers of Planning, at their Addis Ababa meeting in April, had expressed concern at the low level of resources which UNDP was expected to allocate to Africa, both for national IPFs and the regional programme for 1992-1994 and he expressed the hope that that concern would be reflected in the decisions of the Council and translated into UNDP programmes. He requested the Council, in particular, to allocate sufficient resources to the regional programme in order to facilitate the integration activities undertaken by OAU for the purpose of preparing the ground for an African economic community. He thanked UNDP for the support it had provided to the OAU secretariat in the context of projects RAF/87/101 and 104.

28. He welcomed the decision to promote national execution, but stressed that competence must always come first and that the application of the principle should not hamper the promotion of African economic integration. The OAU once again drew attention to the lack of balance between the representation of Africa compared with other regions in UNDP offices and asked that the situation should be corrected.

29. Taking the view that more consistent financial flows, fair prices for commodities, increased technical assistance and a speedy solution of the debt problem were the real keys to the improvement of the indicators, on human development, the human rights situation and democratization, he had misgivings about the value of the concept of human development when applied to a marginalized continent which was being subjected to the draconian conditions of structural adjustment programmes. In conclusion, he expressed satisfaction at the substantial contribution made by UNDP to the cause of development in Africa and hoped that it would continue to give priority to that task.

30. Mr. DORANI (Djibouti), referring briefly to the role of UNDP in the recovery of Africa, said that the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s which was a contract between Africa and its international partners, with firm commitments on each side, deserved the support of the international community.

31. Mr. GIACOMELLI (United Nations International Drug Control Programme) said that the international struggle against illicit drug production was intimately linked to the objective of human development. Today, hardly any country, socio-economic group or age group was spared by the scourge of drugs and the symbiosis between drugs and underdevelopment, social and political ills and organized crime was evident. That was why the General Assembly in 1990 had established the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) which had been entrusted with effective leadership in drug control activities, to ensure coherence of action as well as coordination within the United Nations system. The challenge was so great and complex that all international organizations should include drug control in their programmes. In that connection, the main development aid agencies and international financial institutions had a particular role to play.

32. The Secretary-General had made it clear that fundamental reforms must be pursued and the Administrator of UNDP had proposed bold measures in that direction. UNDCP welcomed the prospect of more coherent United Nations action in the field through a single United Nations country office, combined with well coordinated management of policies at the headquarters level. While considering the ideas put forward by the Administrator in his statement, to be extremely attractive, in the case of UNDCP they would have to take account of the governing tasks which had recently been entrusted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. In that respect, the formula of a development security council suggested in the Human Development Report merited careful attention.

33. Some of the new orientations for technical cooperation contained in the Administrator's report were applicable to drug control activities. UNDCP strongly supported, inter alia, the move towards a programme approach and its related emphasis on national and regional objectives.

34. For some time the United Nations had emphasized the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to drug-related problems and also to other social, economic and ecological problems; it had also recommended a balanced strategy covering illicit drug production, trafficking and consumption. In that context, a number of national and regional plans had already been adopted or were being prepared. To increase the impact of those plans, UNDCP would try to establish functional linkages with the fifth programming cycle.

35. UNDP had been providing important support to the drug programme, particularly through its network of field offices. UNDCP was also relying on OPS for the implementation of technical assistance projects in various regions. A new impetus to that relationship had been provided by the Governing Council the previous year when it invited UNDP to allocate financial resources to the international fight against drugs and to coordinate such activities with UNDCP.

36. The cooperation between the two agencies was also to be developed in relation to the six areas proposed for priority treatment in the country programmes of the fifth cycle. There were striking interplays between the drug problem and each of those priority areas.

37. The recent emphasis on national execution was a step in the right direction. UNDCP had given careful attention to that aspect while recognizing that currently drug control required execution modalities to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

38. The assistance which UNDCP was providing to individual countries was not always sufficient to ensure lasting results because of the transnational character of drug production and trafficking. Programmes must therefore be carried out at the subregional and regional levels through joint execution mechanisms. For the success of those programmes, it was essential that UNDCP should be closely involved not only in providing assistance but also in their implementation.

39. In conclusion, he noted that a growing sector of world public opinion would like to see the United Nations acting not only as a source of rules but also as the organization which put them into practice. To the extent that the

United Nations had been asked to perform new tasks with the same limited means, a word of caution was in order; while restructuring and streamlining the old system was a long-term necessity, the United Nations must maintain a strong framework in order to be able to meet the new challenges.

40. Mr. Breitenstein (Finland) resumed the Chair.

41. Mr. AMISSAH-ARTHUR (Ghana) said that a major challenge facing UNDP was the decline in its resources which prevented it from expanding assistance to developing countries and meeting the needs of other countries seeking its assistance. It was not acceptable to withdraw resources from increasingly needy regions. In Africa the economic situation remained grim. Six years after the General Assembly had launched the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the impact of that initiative had been negligible. Levels of development assistance had stagnated and increases in real interest rates had substantially raised debt servicing obligations.

42. His delegation welcomed the new direction of technical cooperation. UNDP, in consultation with Governments, must come out with a new design for monitoring and evaluating its programmes of technical assistance in order to ensure that those were consistent with national programmes. Field visits by members of the Governing Council to individual countries enabled them to learn at first hand the realities of the situation and to find that Governing Council decisions had not always coincided with government priorities, as they should. UNDP's policy of decision decentralization to the field level should ensure more dialogue and closer cooperation with Governments and also minimize delays.

43. He wished to propose ways in which the utility of the 1992 Human Development Report could be enhanced for policy formulation. In its present form, the report, by ranking countries, had simply been a weapon in the hands of critics to condemn Governments, especially of low-ranking countries. Future reports should analyse developments over time and seek to encourage countries to improve the index of human development by putting appropriate remedies in place. The current ranking system was the more damaging in that it could have an impact on UNDP's resource allocation and encourage a new form of conditionality.

44. Mr. MIYET (France) said that he endorsed the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the member States of the European Community, more particularly on two points: the new challenges that UNDP faced as a result of the recent upheavals on the international scene, and the priority to be attached to the least developed countries, at a time when UNDP had to help the countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS. It was UNDP's duty to cope with a twofold task, and it had the capacity to do so.

45. For two years UNDP had been doing a great deal in terms of methodology to establish more precise action criteria: strategic concepts had been adopted, notably the programme approach, the principle of national execution, and recognition of the human dimensions to development. His delegation unreservedly supported the six priorities which had been selected and around

which UNDP now built its activities. It also supported UNDP's reorganization which was designed essentially to put an end to compartmentalization, to bring the planning bodies and implementation units closer together, and to achieve genuine decentralization. Lastly, the new arrangements for agency support costs replaced a routine uncompetitive mechanism with competitive funding that was based on real costs, was open-ended, and included Governments as they themselves took over local project implementation.

46. UNDP should now carry through the reforms initiated. It should, among other things, foster application of the principle of national execution, provided that countries first had the requisite national capacity. Technical assistance should form part of a process which was, at all times, effective downstream: too many studies, reports and seminars were simply futile exercises because they were not suited to the real situation in the field. Again, by and large the number of activities should be reduced and concentrated so as to cut out a costly and unproductive overspread.

47. Development action should be lasting. Its effectiveness also depended on respect for the various cultures and the various languages of the staff that made up any organization: his delegation would never compromise on the principle of the universality of the United Nations. Yet success also clearly depended on the developing countries themselves and on mobilizing the population. Economic development and democratization should go hand in hand. In his annual report, the Administrator rightly emphasized the human side to development, thus contributing to a fresh look at the matter. Parallel advances in the economic field and in democratization called for further vigilance by Governments and for stronger administration. UNDP had decided to follow such a course and France, mindful of that approach, had therefore made a significant increase in its contribution in 1992. Nevertheless, in pursuing its work, UNDP should further improve its multisectoral approach and provide more thorough multidisciplinary training for field staff.

48. Mr. DE MAIO (Italy) said that he fully supported the statement made by the representative of Portugal on behalf of the member States of the European Community. In view of the manifest interdependence between development and security, development cooperation was no longer a moral duty but also a necessary instrument of preventive diplomacy directed at some of the causes of instability, both in and among nations. In an effective development strategy, the United Nations system and UNDP in particular had a pivotal role to play. The Administrator, recognizing what was at stake, rightly highlighted the human factor in development. Some of the proposals made in the Human Development Report 1992 were obviously utopian or controversial, and the approach was often purposely provocative. But the debate was worthwhile and it must be pursued. His own delegation had two sets of considerations in mind in regard to UNDP's future role.

49. The attempt to establish UNDP as the central funding mechanism for the United Nations system's technical assistance had not been fully successful so far. UNDP should assert its identity and use its comparative advantage as a coordinator of development activities which had the human dimension as their common denominator. It was not a funding mechanism and it should therefore become a fully fledged development institution, as suggested in the Nordic

project for the reform of the United Nations. The population itself must actively participate in programmes and projects if the human component was to achieve sustainable results in terms of capacity-building. The field offices should become essentially human development centres, projects funded by UNDP in the context of country programmes should become human development catalysts, and UNDP personnel should perform a highly professional advisory role.

50. It followed from that view of the future that UNDP should also acquire, in the new international context, a more "political" connotation, not in an ideological sense but promoting an integrated "policy dialogue" involving North, South and East. Enhancing such a political role would also help to improve the coordination of operational activities called for in General Assembly resolution 44/211. Consequently, while it was true that the poorest countries, particularly the least developed, were entitled to the utmost attention from UNDP, it would none the less be a fatal mistake to allow UNDP to become an institution that dealt exclusively with the lower-income countries. For UNDP to remain competitive with other multilateral organizations, the political dimension he had mentioned required maintenance of the Programme's universal character.

51. His delegation therefore favoured a UNDP presence in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, particularly the poorer ones, in the light of the practical necessities that emerged. Furthermore, in regard to the environment, it regretted that the Human Development Report had not yet attempted to elaborate indicators to measure the ecological dimension of the development process. It should be possible to produce such an indicator in 1993. UNDP could and should play a fundamental role in the follow-up to UNCED.

52. Mr. SENILOLI (Fiji) said he noted with satisfaction the steady progress being made towards implementing General Assembly resolution 44/211 and Governing Council decisions 90/32 and 91/37, which called for new orientations for technical cooperation. However, the basic tenets of those texts should be applied much more vigorously.

53. In his report, the Administrator outlined UNDP's activities to arrest environmental degradation. UNCED would provide the lead and the framework for the pursuit of sustainable development and sound environmental management, and UNDP, in the follow-up to the Conference, would have to implement and coordinate the various programmes and activities. The question of the environment and all its aspects would certainly continue to be a top priority issue on UNDP's agenda for many a year.

54. The same was true of the integration of women in development and also of the struggle against AIDS, which would for a long time to come require UNDP to assist many countries in strengthening their national capacity to respond to that scourge.

55. Another UNDP priority was to improve the coordination of operational activities in the United Nations system. UNDP and its partners were significant donors to intercountry programmes and therefore UNDP could play a

pivotal role in donor coordination. The round table meetings it had organized to enable recipients to discuss their projects with potential donors and with multilateral organizations, such as the meeting for Fiji convened in Geneva in 1990, produced very good results. Fiji had long maintained a fruitful relationship with UNFPA. Following the Population Review and Strategy Development (PRSD) exercise, which had proved very positive, UNFPA had formulated a subregional programme for Fiji and 13 other Pacific island countries, and he hoped that it would be approved by the Council. UNDP could also play a valuable role in private sector development. The new Division of Private Sector Development should be able to provide a great deal of assistance to countries in filling the lacunae which prevented them, more particularly, from promoting small-scale industries as they wanted.

56. At the present session, the Governing Council had before it seven country programmes for the small island countries in the Pacific subregion. The preparation of the programmes had involved extensive consultations between the Governments, UNDP, other United Nations agencies and donors, all designed to ensure that the assistance provided would substantially alleviate some of the special difficulties faced by those countries. He wished to thank those concerned and also the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

57. Mr. MATSVAYI (Zimbabwe) said he agreed with the Administrator that technical assistance could be effective only if it was used within the framework of a country's national development plan and that it was the responsibility of Governments to define the priority areas and the nature of the assistance needed to achieve their objectives. Moreover, national execution was the ideal method of project implementation, for it gave nationals confidence and provided them with the essential practical skills. It was less burdensome in terms of administrative costs and the decision-making process, and there was a sense of accountability and continuity that led to more enhanced sustainability of the project. However, national execution should not be a method used at the expense of the quality of project outputs nor should it delay actual implementation. For that reason, the first requirement was capacity-building and an accurate assessment of needs: where there was no capacity, the most appropriate modality should be used.

58. It was gratifying that Zimbabwe was one of the few countries chosen under the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO). Decentralization of the system to the country field office speeded up clearance of projects/programmes and decision-making by the donor. In that respect, nationals should be employed not only at the operational but also at the management level.

59. UNDP played a positive role in global problems such as protection of the environment, the fight against AIDS, and the participation of women in development. His Government accorded high priority to those issues in its Second Five Year National Development Plan, and coordination was necessary in those areas in order to avoid duplication of effort.

60. At the present time, Zimbabwe was facing the worst drought in living memory and, like other countries in southern Africa, it had appealed to the international community for aid, more especially assistance in food and logistics.

61. His delegation noted the Administrator's assurances to countries which feared that assistance to the former Eastern European socialist countries would be detrimental to the developing countries. Admittedly, those countries also needed assistance to deal with their reform programmes and readjustment, but it was to be hoped that there would be no donor fatigue in providing development assistance to Africa, a continent for which the Administrator should try to secure more grants and less concessional assistance.

62. Mr. LACARTE (Uruguay) said that he first wished to make some remarks on the Administrator's introduction to the annual report for 1991 and his interesting suggestions. His delegation agreed that the United Nations could not abandon its role vis-à-vis development problems, given its specific areas of competence in that regard. It also recognized the cardinal importance of the principle of universality which should guide UNDP's activities; it recalled, however, that many developing countries to which the Programme and other United Nations cooperation bodies had ceased to give priority assistance still needed international cooperation which was no less indispensable than that which other countries received, or would receive in the future.

63. Uruguay accepted some of the ideas the Administrator had put forward but considered that the proposal to set up a joint development cooperation system raised a large number of questions: were all United Nations development activities to be centralized under the auspices of a single administration or coordination body, or would only technical cooperation activities be grouped together? The Uruguayan delegation would not be able to support the first possibility, since other bodies such as UNCTAD and UNEP had specific mandates and programmes which it was important to maintain. The second proposal needed to be studied extremely carefully, since certain United Nations cooperation activities were not controlled by UNDP and maintaining them in different structures, while taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed centralization, might perhaps make for greater efficiency. In any case, the proposals should be analysed in the context of the process of reform of the United Nations economic and social sector.

64. With regard to resources, Uruguay reaffirmed its support for the UNDP policy of investing most of its effort in the developing countries with the lowest per capita GNP. However, it noted that cooperation programmes with other developing countries, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, had been cut and that in the long run those countries were penalized by the level of development which they had been able to achieve at the cost of considerable hardship. At the same time, new countries were in turn requesting UNDP assistance to transform their economies; although legitimate, their aspirations required additional inputs so as not to put the developing countries at a disadvantage. One way of assisting them at lesser cost would be to set up field offices for them encompassing the activities of the entire system.

65. Uruguay strongly supported the new orientations in cooperation, as its draft country programme submitted to the Council specifically attested. The purpose of the draft was to establish or to develop the country's capacities in three sectors, namely, promotion of productive investment, reform of the public administration, drafting and implementation of social policies. It

also took into account the ongoing subregional integration process in the context of the common market of the southern cone (MERCOSUR) and attested to the importance which Uruguay ascribed to UNDP cooperation in coordinating activities and channelling extra resources to the IPF.

66. Uruguay found a number of positive aspects in the Human Development Report 1992 in so far as the document took account of the numerous concerns of the developing countries. However, the Uruguayan Government shared the reservations recently expressed by the Group of 77 and would similarly not support certain proposals contained in the report, for example, a world summit on human development - which would duplicate the meeting projected on social issues - or institutional changes which did not come within UNDP's sphere of competence.

67. Mr. ABAKAR (Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel) stressed the importance of the cooperation between UNDP and organizations like his own; he considered that that type of cooperation should be further built up in sectors of activity where intergovernmental regional and subregional organizations played an important role by contributing to economic integration and through their special links with member States. The Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) attached great importance to its productive relationship with the Programme and such United Nations specialized agencies as the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) or the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and very much hoped that they could be infused with a new dynamism and harmony. Its cooperation with UNSO - particularly in the preparation of UNCED in respect of the Sudano-Sahelian region - and with WMO had been particularly rewarding.

68. Since its inception 20 years earler, CILSS had accumulated considerable experience in desertification control and food security. At a recent summit meeting, the heads of State and Government of the member countries of CILSS had reaffirmed the importance of that body in the subregion and made it clear that it continued to be vital to them as a partner in all activities relating to its sphere of competence. On that occasion they had declared themselves in favour of the drafting and negotiation of an international convention on drought and desertification control. It was therefore important that UNSO and the other United Nations bodies responsible for the environment should cooperate more with CILSS to achieve those objectives and regard it as a liaison centre. CILSS hoped to receive increased technical and financial support from UNDP in order to carry out its mandate.

69. Mr. ABUBAKAR (Nigeria) considered that the course of history had accelerated, giving rise to great hopes but also to considerable uncertainty. The disappearance of competing ideologies and zones of influence meant that all countries had responsibility for promoting mutually advantageous economic and political cooperation. The strong commitment and full support of the international community would be needed in order to create conditions in which those auspicious developments and the democratic aspirations of peoples could take root. Simultaneously, the huge disparities between nations had continued to grow, the number of the world's poor had continued to escalate and there

was a risk that many poor countries would be increasingly marginalized; that situation could only be a direct threat to security. The international economic environment had worsened in the last few years despite sustained growth in the industrialized countries. The debt crisis had become more severe, accompanied by stagnation and even decline in aid levels. That outflow could only be reversed by conducive economic policies that increased savings and mechanisms that encouraged investment in the South, and by a debt strategy that led to effective reduction of the debt stock, while taking into account the capacity of debtor countries to generate export earnings.

70. The African countries placed great hopes on the New Agenda for Africa in the 1990s, adopted following the assessment of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). Their Governments had pledged themselves to implement their structural adjustment programmes, continue with the process of political democratization and increase the involvement of the private sector in the development process, while the international community was to provide for the continuous flow of concessional resources, with unimpeded access to the markets and the transfer of technology. The New Agenda would hopefully enable the economic growth of the countries concerned to be speeded up and would give impulse to other socio-economic activities in and outside the African continent.

71. Developing countries remained highly vulnerable to environmental degradation, not only as a result of developments taking place outside their frontiers but also because of their low levels of technological development. Consequently, the developed countries had a special responsibility to promote environmentally sound policies that would contribute to sustainable development through the world. It was also imperative that they should facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technology on concessional terms to developing countries. Africa's expectations from the Rio Earth Summit to be held in June 1992 was to encourage the international community to seek constructive solutions to global problems in a spirit of partnership.

72. He noted that most of the discussions surrounding the HIV/AIDS epidemic had focused on the devastating human toll and the serious strains placed on national health care systems. The epidemic also threatened the economic and social fabrics of many societies, striking young and economically productive adults. It was essential to design effective policies involving local communities and NGOs as well as the Governments themselves which needed to acknowledge the seriousness of the problem and take urgent action to stem further spread of the virus. The challenge for the donor community was to identify the areas of cooperative expertise and move forward quickly in a coordinated approach.

73. Human development could only be understood as a process enabling people to have as wide a choice as possible, of incomes, health, education, good environment and freedom of action and expression. Those basic essentials were lacking in the developing countries generally, the reasons being basically an inequitable economic order. Because of the disparity of economic growth, the developing countries had become net exporters of qualified manpower. Consequently UNDP had a significant role to play in the development of human

resources in Africa in particular; it needed to earmark more resources for training. The absorptive capacity of a recipient country for technical cooperation assistance was a measure of the development of its managerial skills. It was in that light that the Government of Nigeria had adopted the principle of the National Technical Co-operation Assessment Programmes (NATCAP) and that of national execution.

74. With reference to the political transformations in Eastern Europe and the transition to democratic rule in Africa, African countries wholly supported any change that would ensure world stability; however there was an uneasiness that assistance to Africa might be mortgaged to other countries. His delegation welcomed the assurances given by certain countries that they would not abandon the traditional technical assistance recipient countries. It would also be desirable that donor countries and UNDP should furnish them with greater assistance in view of the high cost of their transition processes and the other economic handicaps which weighed them down.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.